

## STARVED FOR HER HANDWRITING

Mama, when I  
saw your comedy  
and tragedy  
plaques carried  
away from the  
garage sale in  
stranger's fingers,  
your peach and  
black silks, even  
satin underwear  
in the costume  
manager's hands  
it was as if pieces  
of you were being  
carried off, like  
parts of a body  
in velvet. I wanted  
to get it down,  
photograph what was  
dissolving. But I  
was packing my own  
past off, leaving  
bundles at curbside  
as footsteps were  
sanded from floors  
and I was throwing  
out cancelled  
checks, it seemed  
so much was void,  
had holes in it

### GARAGE SALE: 1

Old photos  
falling out  
of a trunk  
of when the  
family was  
happy, auto-  
graph books  
and diaries,  
it's as if  
you were  
breaking  
and enter-  
ing

### GARAGE SALE: 2

Fingers like claws  
grab the Ronson  
cigarette holder,  
the comedy and  
tragedy plaques —  
the dealers, like  
muggers, break thru  
past the 9 AM  
start sign at 6  
AM buzzards,  
vultures swooping  
down to clutch  
games we used to  
pull out of the  
storeroom closet,  
spread on the grey  
spiral rug or under  
the carmel glass  
over the dining  
room table, carried  
off like prey.  
Someone steals a  
boxed silver star.  
Gone are the old  
crazed chipped pots  
beans and barley  
soup was baked in,  
the blue violin  
vase there never  
were flowers in  
that stood on the  
white bookcase  
where my mother  
waited for my car,  
my Maverick, my  
Mustang, my T-Bird,  
refrigerator dishes  
from the '50s with  
red boats painted  
on white, things so  
ordinary, like her  
voice on my answer-  
ing machine when I  
was longing for some  
man, not her, to call  
me that sting